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WRECK ASHORE

A Short Adventure for Four 1st-Level Player Characters

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Wreck Ashore is a short D&D adventure for four 1st-level player characters (PCs). The scenario takes place on and around a swampy peninsula that juts out from a longer stretch of coastline. Along one side of this peninsula stretches a dangerous reef. Just offshore on the reef side stands a lighthouse built to warn ships of the danger. At the base of the peninsula on the side away from the reef is a small port town called Seawell.

To get a good feel for this area, look at a map of Florida and imagine that the state is only about 50 miles long and 50 miles wide. The lighthouse is just off the coast near St. Augustine, and Seawell lies on the coast just south of Tallahassee. This peninsula juts out from a longer coastline.

The scenario can be placed on any coastal peninsula that features a reef. As always, feel free to adapt the material presented here as you see fit to make it work with your campaign.

PREPARATION

You (the DM) need the D&D core rulebooks, including the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual* to run this adventure. Featured monsters include alligators, snakes, and panthers (leopards). To make the scenario more realistic, you might also want to read up on the terrain of Everglades National Park. This scenario utilizes the D&D v.3.5 rules, but it can easily be used with the 3.0 rules as well.

To get started, print out the adventure and the map, which can be obtained from the January 2001 Map-a-Week archives at <http://www.wizards.com/dnd/article.asp?x=dnd/mw/mw20010101x>. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, threats, and major NPCs. Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Though small, Seawell is a prosperous trading town with a good location on the coast. Next to it is a long peninsula that features mostly swamplike terrain. The most dangerous inhabitants of this peninsula are lizardfolk, but several kinds of reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds dwell there too. Most of these creatures don't bother the town, and Seawell's militia is experienced at repulsing raids by the more aggressive lizardfolk.

A large reef extends the entire length of the peninsula on the side away from Seawell. This great wall of coral is a favorite site for fishermen, but it has always



presented a serious hazard to ships approaching from that direction. Thus, about 45 years ago, the people of Seawell built a lighthouse on a small promontory near the reef, about 200 yards from the shoreline. Operated by a family who lived inside it, this lighthouse ensured that ships could easily steer clear of the reef.

A few weeks ago, a group of pirates who had been unsuccessful on the seas decided to try a different tack—luring ships to their doom. After killing the lighthouse keeper and his family, the pirates built a high wooden tower on the beach about 200 yards from the lighthouse, then lit a fire atop it. Captains using this false “lighthouse” to navigate ran aground on the reef, and the pirates rowed out to steal the foundering ships’ cargo and claim the wrecks as salvage. They murdered the crews as well, so that no one could spread the story of the false lighthouse. So far, three ships have fallen victim to these pirates, and the people of Seawell are beginning to wonder what has happened to them.

Thus far, however, they have not been able to mount an investigation. To keep the townsfolk away from the site for as long as possible, the pirate captain has been stirring up a small group of lizardfolk that live on the peninsula. Emboldened by the pirates, these creatures have begun raiding Seawell and its environs in earnest.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters must head for the lighthouse by either land or sea, fighting off various swamp denizens along the way. Once they arrive at the lighthouse, they discover that the operators have been murdered and the light extinguished. From there, they must locate the pirate camp and the false lighthouse and put a stop to the renegades’ plan.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The PCs may come to Seawell for any number of reasons. As the DM, it is your job to decide how best to involve them in the adventure. You can use the following hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to fit your campaign or the characters.

- The PCs live in Seawell and have been expecting a shipment of merchandise that has not arrived.
- The characters come upon Seawell in their travels and hear about the problems plaguing the town in a tavern. They also might see a sign offering employment to anyone willing to brave the swamps.
- The PCs are on a ship bound for Seawell from the reef side. The ship runs aground, and its crew is attacked by pirates. If you decide to use this approach, the PCs

encounter the pirates first, then the false lighthouse, and finally the swamp denizens while working their way overland to Seawell.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Unless the PCs came to this area aboard a ship that has foundered, the adventure begins when they reach Seawell. There they can find out about the current situation from any of the townsfolk.

SEAWELL

Seawell is a small but prosperous trading town on the seacoast, nestled into the base of a peninsula. If you’re using the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*, you could place it near the peninsula just south of the Spider Swamp, in southern Calimshan. In the world of Greyhawk, you could either fit Seawell into the Hold of the Sea Princes, or place it on the Wild Coast between Safeton and Fax. Either location would require extending a swamp across the peninsula.

Since the town is near enough to the peninsula to attract occasional lizardfolk attacks, it maintains a well-trained militia for protection. Even so, however, Seawell retains the feel of a small, bustling port town rather than a military post.

Two problems plague Seawell at present: the increased hostility from the local lizardfolk and the continued absence of all ships expected from the direction of the reef. Anyone in town can provide the PCs with basic information about these issues. If they seem uninterested in the missing ships, the mayor approaches them upon finding out that they are adventurers. He offers them 50 gp each, plus all the treasure they find, to find out what happened to the ships and resolve the problem.

The characters are not really needed to deal with the lizardfolk raids, since the militia has thus far been able to repulse the attacks. They can, of course, strike out on their own through the swamps in search of lizardfolk to attack, but such a trek is beyond the scope of this adventure. Doing so, however, might provide them with clues about the pirates, since they have been in close contact with some lizardfolk tribes.

If desired, the characters can hire a guide (expert 1 with maximum ranks in Survival) to take them through the swamp for 1 sp per day. They can also find a 1st-level druid or ranger who consents to guide them for an equal share of any treasure found.

The characters can take either of two routes to get to the lighthouse. The sea passage (encounter B) is both



faster and less dangerous than the overland route across the peninsula (encounter A).

A. THE PENINSULA

The “swamps” that cover the peninsula are not swamp-land in the classic sense. They do, however, support the kinds of creatures that generally lair in swamps.

THE ECOLOGY

During the wet season, water from a lake farther inland flows over the grassy peninsula to the sea. The result is a river many miles wide but only about 2 feet deep, hidden for the most part by tall grasses. Though not impassable, the peninsula is quite dangerous during this time because of the alligators, snakes, birds, and other swampland creatures that roam its waters.

During the dry season, the water recedes, leaving most of the ground dry. When the water level begins to drop, the alligators dig deep pits known as solution holes to trap the remaining water. A typical solution hole measures about 20 feet across and is home to one or more alligators, plus some fish, turtles, snakes, and birds throughout the dry season.

The peninsula is dotted with stands of trees growing on raised areas known as hummocks. A typical hummock measures about 300 feet across, but some are as large as 800 feet in diameter. Trees grow thickly on the hummocks, providing shelter for large predators such as panthers. During the dry season, the hummocks serve as a refuge for other kinds of animals as well.

The characters arrive during the dry season, after most of the animals have retreated to the hummocks or the solution holes. Birds, however, can still be found just about everywhere.

MOVEMENT

Plenty of game trails cross the peninsula, making passage relatively easy during the dry season. Assuming a speed of 30 feet and no forced marching, a typical band of adventurers can travel 18 miles a day without getting lost via such trails. At this speed, characters can reach the lighthouse in just under three days. Horses can traverse the peninsula with no trouble, but the townsfolk recommend against taking them there, since they usually fall prey to hungry panthers at night.

ENCOUNTERS

Use the Random Encounter Table for temperate swamp in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine encounters on the peninsula. Check every hour while the PCs are moving overland, and every time they find

a hummock or solution hole. Check every four hours while the party is camped.

The following optional encounters may be used whenever they become appropriate.

A1. Lizardfolk (EL Variable)

A tribe of lizardfolk that makes its home near the end of the peninsula has been raiding the area around Seawell for some time. Recently, they have been more aggressive in their raids at the pirates' behest. If you want to bring these lizardfolk into the adventure, or if the PCs wander too far down the peninsula, use the base lizardfolk statistics given in the *Monster Manual* to create raiding bands for encounters.

A2. Alligator (EL 2)

Use this encounter if the PCs decide to poke around in a solution hole.

Creature: An alligator lies hidden in a solution hole, shielded by the reeds that grow inside it. As long as no one disturbs its hole, the alligator is content to remain there, taking 10 on its Hide check. It defends its hole against any intrusion, but it otherwise ignores the PCs.

🔥 **Alligator:** hp 22; see *Monster Manual* page 271 (crocodile statistics).

Tactics: A successful DC 33 Spot check is required to see the alligator before it moves. (Thus, for 1st-level characters, the alligator is virtually invisible until it attacks.)

If its hole is disturbed, the alligator waits until a foe comes within 20 feet, then charges to the attack, using its swim speed. At the end of the charge, it bites the target character and uses its tail slap attack on anyone else who happens to be within reach. The alligator fights to the death to defend its hole, but it doesn't pursue the PCs if they retreat.

A3. Constrictor Snake (EL 2)

Various kinds of snakes slither around all over the peninsula.

Creature: A constrictor snake is sunning itself on a game trail.

🔥 **Constrictor Snake:** hp 19; see *Monster Manual* page 279.

Tactics: Thanks to its natural coloration and the detritus on the ground, the snake is effectively hidden (DC 21 Spot check to see it before it attacks). The snake attacks the first character to come within 5 feet, biting and constricting on a successful hit. If it manages to constrict a foe, it fights to the death. If not, it slithers away (using the withdraw action) after its first attack. Once the snake reaches the nearby undergrowth, it has total cover and concealment.

A4. Vipers (EL 2)

Vipers nest in various hidden areas, but they particularly like hummocks, where fallen trees provide good cover.

Creatures: The PCs may disturb a nest of small vipers when they find a fallen tree blocking the trail, or while searching for a campsite, firewood, or water.

🐍 **Small Vipers (4):** hp 4 each; see *Monster Manual* page 280.

Tactics: When the PCs disturb the tree trunk or log under which the vipers lie hidden, the creatures explode out of hiding and bite anything within reach. After this initial attack, they slither off into the undergrowth (using the withdraw action), where they have total cover and concealment.

A5. Panthers at Rest (EL 2 or 4)

Panthers often hide in the hummocks during the day. Any PCs who venture into these copses of large trees may disturb the big cats.

Creatures: One or two panthers have bedded down for the day in a thicket of young trees, where they are well hidden (DC 26 Spot check required to see them).

🐆 **Panther (1 or 2):** hp 4 each; see *Monster Manual* page 274 (leopard statistics).

Tactics: The cats give a warning snarl when the party comes within 10 feet of them. The PCs can escape without a fight if they leave without delay. Otherwise, the cats charge and use their pounce attacks. Each panther fights until reduced to 9 or fewer hit points, then flees.

A6. Hunting Panthers (EL 2 or 4)

Panthers may attack the PCs in their camp at night, especially if they leave food out or bring animals (such as mounts) onto the peninsula with them.

Creatures: One or two panthers stealthily approach the PCs' camp in search of food.

🐆 **Panther (1 or 2):** hp 4 each; see *Monster Manual* page 274 (leopard statistics).

Tactics: The hunting cats use their Hide and Move Silently skills to creep within about 30 feet of the PCs (DC 21 Spot or Listen check to notice the cats before they attack). As soon as they are in position, the panthers use their pounce attacks. If the characters have mounts or other animals with them, the cats attack those creatures first. Each panther fights until reduced to 9 or fewer hit points, then flees.

B. THE SEA PASSAGE

The characters can also reach the lighthouse by sea. Taking a ship around the peninsula requires less time than the overland route and is also less dangerous

because fewer encounters occur. If you would rather make the characters walk through the swamp, you can just rule that no ships are available.

A small coastal sailing vessel can make about 50 miles a day, so it can get around the peninsula in just two days. The local fishermen don't like to be on the water at night because of the reef, so they anchor in coves when the sun goes down.

The journey is rough but uneventful while the characters are aboard ship. If they get off the ship for any reason (even while it stands at anchor during the night), they have one of the numbered encounters (DM's choice) detailed in encounter A.

C. A BAD NEIGHBORHOOD

The terrain around the lighthouse and the pirate camp consists of sand dunes dotted with patches of tall grass and trees. The dunes form a raised area between the beach and the swamp, which shields the beach from the view of anyone approaching from the peninsula.

If PCs came overland, they can see the tops of the lighthouse and the pirates' wooden tower above the trees only after ascending the dunes. If they came by ship, they can see the entire setup from afar. But they must disembark some miles distant from the lighthouse and pirate camp because the reef allows no safe landing any closer than that. They can get to shore by swimming or via a small lifeboat, then hike toward the buildings.

Creatures: The pirates regularly dispatch two-person teams to patrol the area. These patrols clear the area of predators and lizardfolk and ensure the security of the camp.

A local tribe of lizardfolk is also clandestinely watching the beach. These lizardfolk are not the ones that have been raiding Seawell. This tribe distrusts the pirates, whose patrols have clashed with their hunting and foraging parties in recent days. Furthermore, these lizardfolk were on good terms with the lighthouse keepers, who made an effort to get along with them. Fearing that the presence of the pirates means something has happened to their friends at the lighthouse, they send occasional lone scouts to check out the area.

Regardless of how the PCs get to the dunes, they meet both the pirates and the lizardfolk (DM's choice as to which group is encountered first) shortly after arrival.

CI. PIRATE PATROL (EL 1)

When walking a patrol, the pirates follow the trails through the area, walking at a brisk pace. Characters can spot them 70 to 100 ([1d4+6] × 10) feet away.

Creatures: The pirates patrol in groups of two.

✦ **Pirate/Wrecker Crew (2):** Male or female human warrior 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (1d6+3/18–20, masterwork cutlass) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+3/18–20, masterwork cutlass) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +3, Profession (sailor) +3, Swim +6; Dodge, Weapon Focus (cutlass).

Possessions: Masterwork cutlass (treat as a scimitar), masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of mage armor*, *potion of jump*, *potion of endure elements*, explorer's outfit, 38 gp.

Tactics: Upon meeting any humanoids other than lizardfolk, the pirates assume (probably correctly) that the group has come from Seawell. They dash to opposite sides of the trail, take cover, and loose crossbow bolts at the intruders. They keep firing for 2 or 3 rounds, or until their foes close to melee range, then withdraw through the undergrowth in opposite directions. The pirates have no stomach for a fair fight, and even less for a battle in which the odds are against them. They surrender as soon as the characters manage to catch up with them.

Development: A captured pirate pretends to be tough, but a successful Intimidate check (opposed by the pirate's Wisdom check +1) makes the prisoner reveal all he knows about the pirates' activities in the area—which is pretty much everything (see encounter E for details).

If one or both of the pirates escape, they make their way back to the pirate camp as quickly as they can. They move cross-country, so they might not beat the PCs back there (see encounter B for details).

C2. LIZARDFOLK SCOUT (EL 1)

Lizardfolk scouts usually stick to the undergrowth near the trails, moving parallel to them. Having developed a healthy respect for the pirates' crossbows, they stay quiet and hidden as much as they can.

Each PC can make a DC 10 Spot check to see the scout when she is 40 feet away. A –1 penalty applies to the check for each 10 feet of distance between the PC and the scout.

Creature: Each lizardfolk scout works alone, doing her best to keep the pirates under surveillance and ambushing them if she can.

✦ **Lizardfolk Scout:** hp 11; see *Monster Manual* page 169.

Tactics: Like the pirates, the scout assumes that the PCs have come from Seawell. She further assumes that they are hostile and decides to make a show of force.

The scout begins by hurling a javelin into the dirt in front of the lead PC and commanding the characters (in Common) to halt. If they obey, she demands to know what they are doing in the area. If they attack, she drops her shield and flees to the nearest waterway, where she escapes by swimming underwater.

Development: If the PCs converse with the scout, she tells them that the lighthouse keepers haven't been seen for six weeks. She also can give the characters a general layout of the pirate camp (see encounter E) and a description of their activities. The scout also warns the PCs about the pirate patrols in the area.

If the characters capture the scout, they get more or less the same information as they would have by conversing with her.

If the PCs have not yet attacked the scout, they can use a Diplomacy check to persuade her to join in an attack on the pirate camp. Her starting attitude is indifferent if the PCs have been rude or menacing toward her, or friendly if they have been polite and open. To win her aid, they must shift her attitude to helpful (see page 72 in the *Player's Handbook*).

If the PCs tell the scout that they have already met the pirate patrol and allowed one or two pirates to escape, she gladly contacts the rest of the tribe. Once altered, the tribe prevents the escaping pirates from returning to their camp.

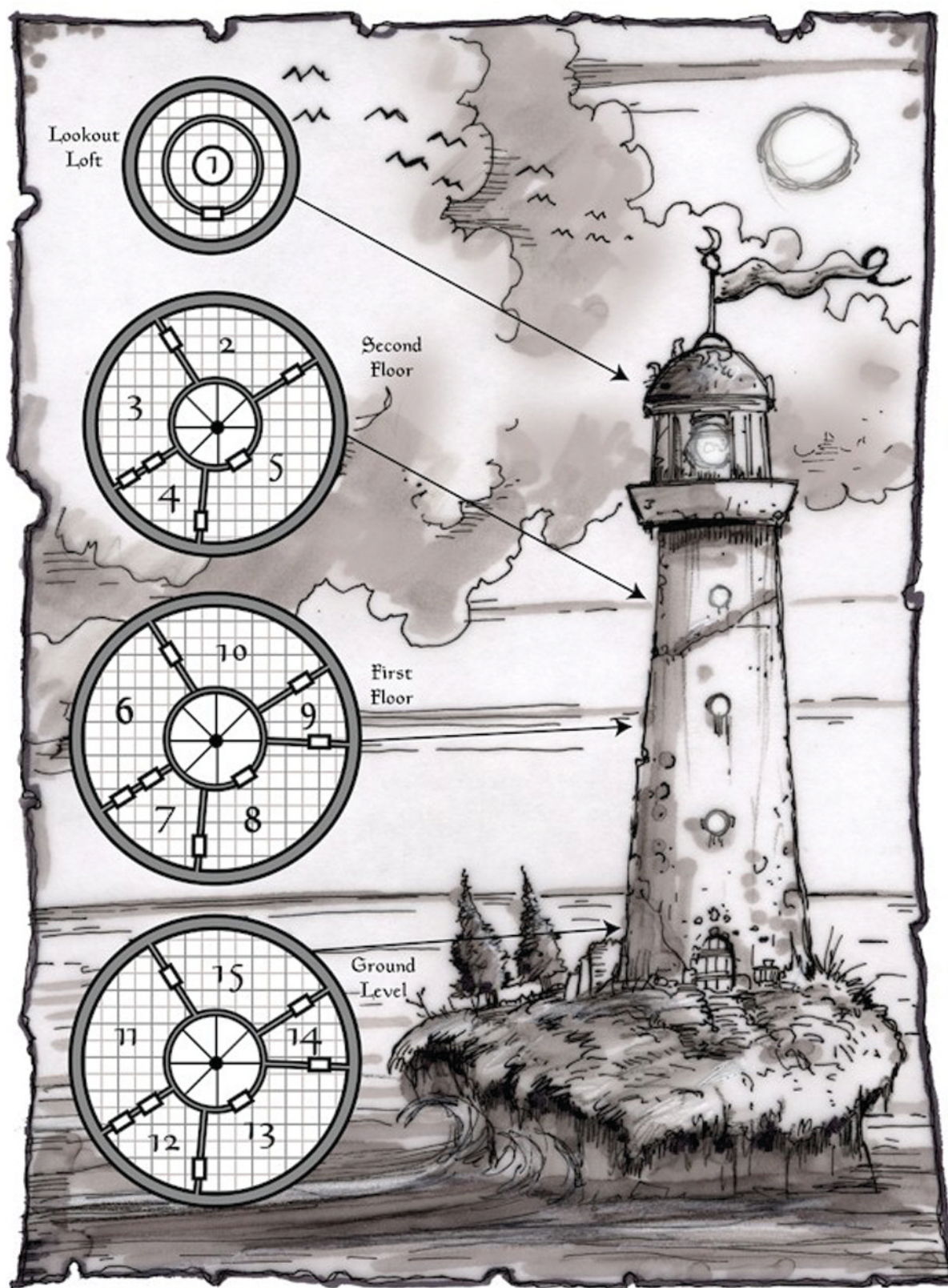
D. THE LIGHTHOUSE

Standing about 60 feet tall, the lighthouse dominates the promontory on which it stands. A sea wind always blows around the lighthouse, even when there is none at the shoreline.

The lighthouse is the home of Mirval Kojar (human male expert 4), his wife Stenna (human female commoner 5), and their two sons, Mirval Jr. and Kolin (both human male commoners 2). The Kojars also have another son, but he left about three years ago to see the world.

The pirates slew all four of the Kojars and left their bodies in the lighthouse to rot. The corpses have been there for nearly six weeks, and the whole lighthouse now smells of death and decay.

A short key follows, but there is no treasure left here. The pirates took everything of value from the lighthouse when they killed the family.



D1. LIGHT CHAMBER

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter this chamber.

The broken shards of a glass housing litter the floor of this chamber at the top of the lighthouse.

A large oil-powered lamp provided the light, and the mirrors and lenses in the housing reflected and amplified it. The pirates smashed both the lamp and the housing and removed all the oil.

D2. MIRVAL JR.'S BEDROOM

Each of the two children had his own bedroom, since the lighthouse was quite spacious.

A putrid stench like that of rotting bodies fills this chamber. On one side of the room stand an open, empty wardrobe and an adult-sized bed with books lying open atop it. More books fill the shelves along the walls, and a telescope stands beside the window. Clothes litter the floor.

Mirval Jr.'s body lies decaying in a corner of the room, covered by discarded clothes. The books on the bed are about astronomy, Mirval's chief interest.

D3. PLAYROOM

Mirval Jr. and Kolin played together in this chamber while their parents tended to business.

This room is filled with furniture sized for both adults and children. Boxes of toys and books line the walls, and hobby horses and toy carts stand here and there.

A thin patina of dust covers everything here.

D4. KOLIN'S BEDROOM

This chamber is the bedroom of Kolin, the younger son.

The stench is overpowering in this room. Its source is easy to see—a child's corpse lies rotting amid scattered toys on the floor. A small bed stands against one wall, and beside it is an open wardrobe, its contents scattered about the floor. A window on the outer wall lets in the sunlight.

The corpse is that of Kolin, who was killed when the pirates sacked the lighthouse. The wardrobe is filled with clothes for a small boy.

D5. STORAGE

Linens, oil, and other nonfood items were stored here, but the pirates looted the chamber to augment their own supplies. Nothing is left here now except empty and broken crates.

D6. SITTING ROOM

Mirval and his wife Stenna relaxed here after the day's work was done.

A comfortable-looking sofa and two upholstered chairs make this room seem cozy and inviting. In front of the sofa is a small table, and bookshelves line the wall. Most of the books now lie heaped on the floor. Beside one of the chairs is a small bag with knitting needles protruding from it.

The bag contains Stenna's knitting.

D7. EXTRA BEDROOM

This room once belonged to the Kojars' oldest son. After he left to seek his fortune, the room was converted into a second spare bedroom.

This chamber contains an adult-sized bed and an empty wardrobe, plus bookshelves whose contents now lie scattered on the floor.

The books in this room are all about seafaring and oceangoing vessels.

D8. COMMON WORKROOM

The Kojars used this chamber to repair furniture, fix the light housing, and make new items of wood, glass, and metal.

Tool racks are mounted on the walls of this room, and large tables occupy the center.

The tools here are for woodworking, glassblowing, and metalwork.

D9. EXTRA BEDROOM

This chamber is furnished exactly like area D7, except that there are no bookshelves.

D10. MASTER BEDROOM

This room was where Mirval and Stenna slept.

A double bed dominates this room. Beside it stand an open, empty wardrobe and a night table with a lamp. Clothes are strewn everywhere. The smell of death hangs heavy in here.



Stenna's body lies in the corner by the bed.

D11. STORAGE

This chamber was devoted to storage of outerwear, including boots and rain gear of all sorts.

D12. BATHROOM

This chamber contains four pits that go through the floor into the ground. Herbs are normally used to sweeten the air, but they have not been replaced for the past six weeks.

D13. ENTRY ROOM

This room is the entryway to the lighthouse.

A small table beside the outer door holds two oil lamps. On the opposite wall are hooks for cloaks, and boots are lined up underneath them. A chair stands in the corner.

Four pairs of boots stand along the wall. The cloaks that once hung on the hooks, however, are gone.

D14. PANTRY

This room is filled with row upon row of shelves that once held food stores. The pirates looted most of these supplies.

D15. KITCHEN AND DINING AREA

The family ate in a corner of the kitchen.

A stone oven dominates one wall of this room. Nearby stands a sink, and cupboards line the walls, their doors hanging open. One corner holds a table and five chairs.

The dishes and pots from the cupboards are gone, looted by the pirates.

E. THE PIRATE CAMP (EL 4)

The pirates have built a campsite just off the beach on the lighthouse side of the peninsula. Their light tower is out in the open on the beach, but their tents and semipermanent structures are concealed in the bushes off to the side.

The pirates wrecked and salvaged a ship two days before the PCs' arrival. After slaying the crew and looting the ship, they burned the wreck; thus, no trace of it is visible from the beach or above the water's surface. The pirates are still in the process of sorting the loot, figuring out what they have, and deciding what to do

with it. Except for the patrols, most of them stick fairly close to the camp.

NORMAL PIRATE ACTIVITIES

The pirates' regular activities include the following.

- **Inventorying and Appraising Loot.** The pirates have dragged most of the goods they took from the lighthouse and all the goods salvaged from the wrecked ship into their campsite. During the day, four pirates are usually engaged in sorting, appraising, and recording the loot under the captain's supervision.
- **Hiding Loot.** When they're finished with the sorting, the pirates pack their stolen goods in barrels and bury them above the high tide mark. At any given time, two pirates are busy packing barrels and two more are hauling a packed barrel off somewhere to bury it.
- **Patrolling the Area.** This patrol is in addition to the one in encounter A. Two pirates (either two crew members or the first mate and a crew member) are always on patrol, except at mealtimes. The patrol searches for tracks and keeps an eye out for unwanted visitors, such as survivors of wrecks or lizardfolk. The first mate directs these patrols and occasionally goes out himself. Patrols cover a circular area about 200 yards around the camp, but the pirates investigate anything suspicious that they see, even if it is farther away. They keep the camp informed as to their movements outside the base area, and a second patrol comes looking for any missing crew members after 1 hour.
- **Preparing Meals.** At mealtimes, one or two pirates cook under the pavilion. The whole crew eats together, so patrols are suspended during meals.
- **General Activities.** Pirates not engaged in any other activity gamble, repair equipment, read, or pursue other leisure activities during the day.
- **Nighttime:** At night, the pirates light the false light, and one of them remains atop the tower as lookout. Those not on patrol sleep in the tents.

There are always pirates in the camp unless a wreck is being salvaged. When they discover the PCs depends on how quiet and discreet the characters are while exploring the area. Use your judgment here, and make use of Spot and Listen checks.

PIRATES ON ALERT

Any pirate scouts who escaped from an encounter with the PCs try to return to the camp by an overland route. The trip takes at least a day, and the pirates are subject to the same dangers from the swamp as the PCs are.

The characters, however, can make the same trip in just a few hours using the trails. As noted earlier, the characters can also enlist the aid of the local lizardfolk to stop the pirates from returning to the camp.

If any pirate who has seen the PCs manages to return to camp, the pirates post one or two extra guards in the camp and stop their patrols. If no attack is forthcoming within a day, the captain, first mate, and two crew members set out to confront the PCs.

HANDLING THE PIRATES

This encounter can be extremely dangerous for the PCs. If they try to attack all the pirates at the same time, they face an EL 4 encounter that will probably kill them, though they might just pull through if they surprise the pirates or if they've managed to recruit the lizardfolk scout. The captain alone is a challenge for a 1st-level party (see The Pirates, below). Thus, the PCs have to find clever ways to handle this encounter. Below are some options they might use.

- **Get Help from Seawell.** The PCs can go back to Seawell, explain that pirates are camped on the beach, and recruit some help. They should be able to get enough militia people together to help them defeat the pirates, especially if they have watched long enough to know their enemies' true strength. If the PCs were spotted, however, the pirates are ready for trouble.
- **Divide and Conquer.** The characters may choose to wear down the pirates by taking out small groups of them and then retreating to rest. The party has ample opportunity to make such attacks as the pirates go about their daily business. But if they allow any pirate they have attacked to escape, the pirates will be on their guard.
- **Get Help from the Lizardfolk.** To make this option work, the characters must already have befriended the lizardfolk scout. In that case, they can raise a large enough force to help them defeat the pirates, as noted above.

THE PIRATES

The PCs can encounter the pirates anywhere within the camp area. How exactly that encounter occurs depends on how the PCs decide to approach the camp (see Handling the Pirates, above).

Creatures: The camp is home to Erqua Ashilim and her crew of cutthroats. The band consists of Erqua, her first mate Svingal Stonefist, and six crew members—though only two crew members are actually in the camp at any time.

✦ **Erqua Ashilim, Pirate/Wrecker Captain:** Female human ranger 1/sorcerer 1; CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8 plus 1d4; hp 6; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork falchion) or +4 ranged (1d8/[TS]3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +3 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork falchion) or +4 ranged (1d8/[TS]3, masterwork composite longbow); SQ favored enemy (humans +2), wild empathy +2; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 13. Height 5 ft. 9 in., weight 170 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +3, Hide +6, Jump +5, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +4, Search +6, Spellcraft +4, Spot +4, Survival +4, Swim +5, Use Rope +6; Combat Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Track.

Favored Enemy: Erqua gains a +2 bonus on her Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against humans. She gets the same bonus on weapon damage rolls against humans.

Wild Empathy (Ex): Erqua can use body language, vocalizations, and demeanor to improve the attitude of an animal (such as a bear or a monitor lizard). This ability functions like a Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of a person. Her bonus on the check is +2. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly. Erqua and the animal must study each other for 1 minute. This ability can also be used to influence a magical beast with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2, but Erqua takes a –4 penalty on the check.

Sorcerer Spells Known (5/4; save DC 11 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, mage hand, read magic*; 1st—*mage armor, sleep*.

Possessions: Masterwork falchion, masterwork composite longbow, 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of mage armor*, *potion of jump*, explorer's outfit, spell component pouch, two tanglefoot bags, 8 gp.

✦ **Svingal Stonefist, Pirate/Wrecker First Mate:** Male dwarf rogue 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d6+3; hp 6; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, masterwork morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., dwarf traits, trapfinding; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6. Height 4 ft. 3 in., weight 164 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Craft (metalworking) +2, Craft (stoneworking) +2, Hide +6, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Search +4, Spot +5, Tumble +6; Combat Reflexes.



Dwarf Traits: Svingal has a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against orcs and goblinoids, a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells and spell-like abilities, a +2 racial bonus on Fortitude saves against all poisons, and a +4 dodge bonus against giants. He also has stonecunning (+2 racial bonus on checks to notice unusual stonework; can make a check for unusual stonework as though actively searching when within 10 ft. and can use the Search skill to find stonework traps as a rogue can; intuit depth) and stability (+4 bonus on ability checks made to avoid being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground). In addition, Svingal has a +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks and Craft or Profession checks related to stone or metal (already figured into the statistics above).

Trapfinding: Svingal can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a DC higher than 20.

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork morningstar, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of mage armor*, *potion of jump*, *potion of endure elements*, explorer's outfit, thieves' tools, 55 gp.

👤 **Pirate/Wrecker Crew (2):** Male or female human warrior 1; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (1d6+3/18–20, masterwork cutlass) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+3/18–20, masterwork cutlass) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +3, Profession (sailor) +3, Swim +6; Dodge, Weapon Focus (cutlass).

Possessions: Masterwork cutlass (treat as a scimitar), masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of mage armor*, *potion of jump*, *potion of endure elements*, explorer's outfit, 38 gp.

Tactics: Should it come to a fight, the pirates mass together and attack from a distance with ranged weapons and spells. After one or two volleys of projectiles and spells, the pirates close to melee range. They haven't been taking any prisoners lately, but they give the PCs a chance to surrender if the opportunity presents itself. (The pirates suspect that the PCs are a cut above the ordinary seafarers they've been fighting recently, and they figure they can collect a ransom or force some kind of service from them.) If the PCs refuse to surrender or have the upper hand in the fight, the pirates fight to the death, since they know that's the fate that awaits them if captured.

Development: The PCs must defeat all the pirates before they can safely examine the loot.

Treasure: In addition to their personal possessions, the pirates have collected a considerable amount of loot. Their stash includes twelve casks of salted meat (1 gp each), eighteen casks of wine and other spirits (18 gp each), twenty-eight bales of cloth (10 gp each), three casks of glassware (15 gp each), fifteen hundred copper ingots (30 pounds, 15 gp each), nineteen casks of oil (2 gp each), and fifteen casks of herbs and spices (25 gp each).

KEY TO THE CAMP

The points of interest within the pirate camp are detailed below.

E1. The Tower

The false light tower is situated about 30 feet from the shoreline and 20 feet from the edge of the bushes that conceal the pirate campsite. The structure is basically a 60-foot-tall, skeletal tower with a ladder attached on the side nearest the campsite. It measures 25 ft. square at the top and slopes outward toward the ground. The top supports a great fire basin made of stone and metal, as well as a pile of wood. Beside the structure stands a winch that the pirates use to haul wood and other supplies to the top of the tower.

The pirates burn a fire in the basin at night to simulate the light of the lighthouse. The tower is generally manned only at night, but the pirates sometimes use it as a surveillance platform during the day. Those on top of the tower can stay out of sight of people on the ground just by staying low.

E2. The Campsite

The pirate camp is located 40 feet from the tower, about 20 feet beyond the edge of the bushes. They cannot see the shore from their camp, but they rely on the noise of a wreck to know when a ship has grounded on the reef.

The campsite consists of four 15-foot-by-15-foot tents for sleeping, a central area with a 20-foot-square wooden pavilion under which the pirates cook their meals, and three wooden buildings, each 15 feet by 10 feet, that they use for storage. The structures are well built because the pirates worked on this camp for weeks before lighting the false lighthouse fire for the first time.

E3. Boats

Two large rowboats, each equipped with four oars, stand on the beach. The pirates use these to row out to the reef and salvage wrecks.



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Whether or not the PCs had help, they become heroes in Seawell after vanquishing or driving off the pirates. They receive the promised payment, if any, and free room and board for a week. Others in town who know where heroes are needed point them in the direction of further adventures, but they are always welcomed in Seawell.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

If you wish to expand on this adventure, just assume that Erqua was in league with, or working for, some other villain. A clue in her possessions can lead the characters on a quest for the power behind the pirates.

If the PCs choose to stay in the area for a while, they could become involved with the local lizardfolk in any of several ways. The hostile tribes might decide to start a real war with Seawell, and the characters might be

called upon to stop the threat. Or perhaps the lizardfolk need help to deal with a threat deep in the swamp. In such a case, the PCs could find themselves aiding the creatures that the town views as enemies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Wiese began playing D&D with the blue boxed set (the one after the original three small pamphlets). He has campaigned through three and a half editions of his favorite roleplaying game, and he has tried *Call of Cthulhu* and some other games as well. Through it all, he has learned that a great DM makes a great campaign, so he is happy to assist great DMs with little ideas such as this adventure. He led the RPGA Network through the tough times and now works at UNR as a biochemical researcher. Life is very full between studies, work, pets (three dogs, three cats, a fish, a frog, a toad, and two rats), and gaming, but he always puts his wife and his faith first.